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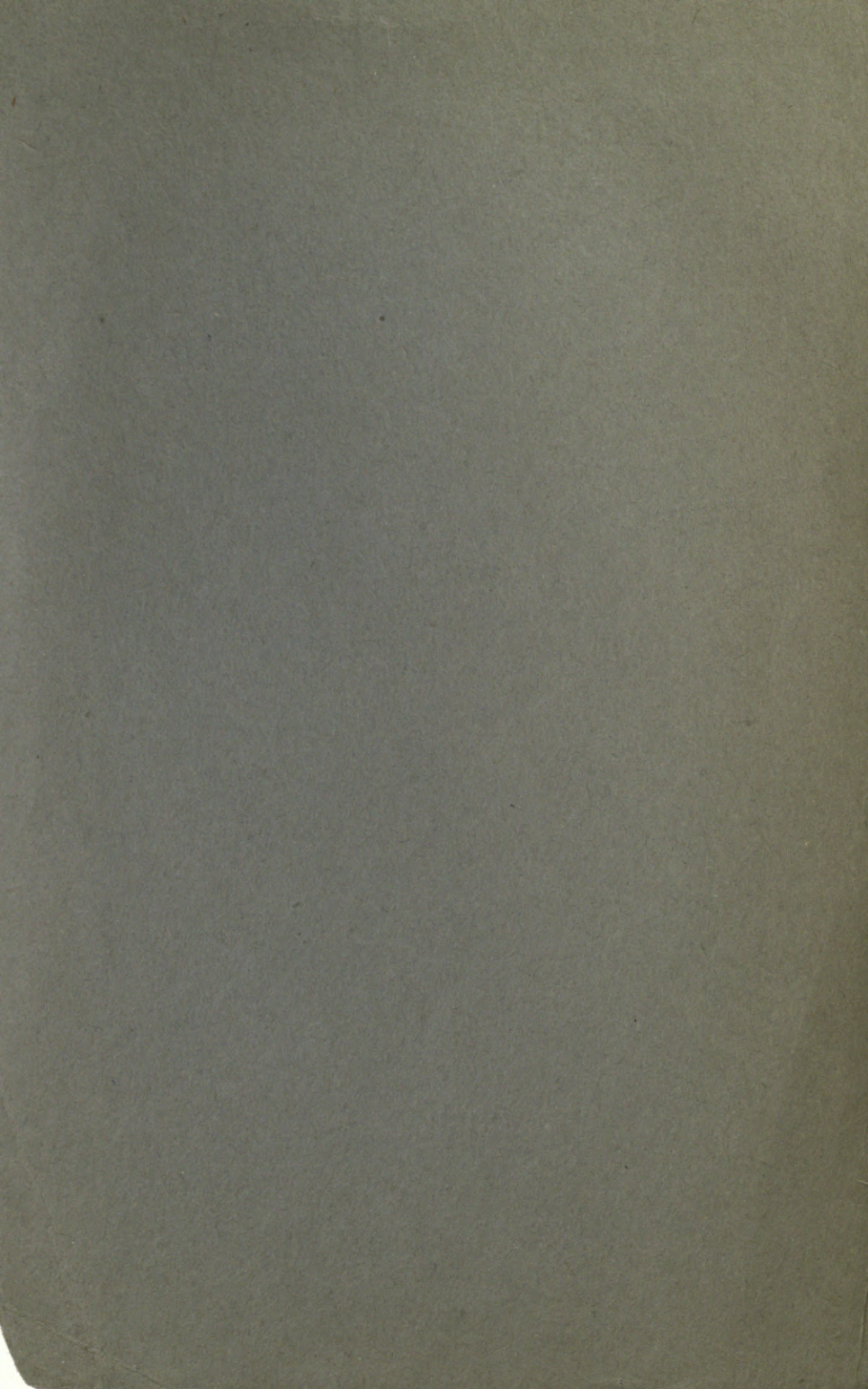
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ERICA COTTERILL.





## LETTERS





# LETTERS

CONTINUED

BY

ERICA COTTERILL

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## LETTERS

It feels since Ive taken the letters I wrote to Cett and Surd and what I wrote to you to be printed that Im reaching nearer a place where I shall be able to make things reach you more by ways that arent through spoken or written words than before, but Im not sure of that, and I cant understand it clearly with my mind, I can understand theyre often only like a trail or scent, perhaps theyre always only that, but Im not clear that they wont always be able to help, even if its only as that—but perhaps words are often *over* used—I think they often are, I mean I think often the energy used to take in or give out through words is out of proportion, there isnt enough left to take in and give out through other ways—but do you see darling it may be I feel it more than most people because Im often much too what can be called dreamy—I mean that things that happen suddenly often fluster and bewilder me, Im not *there* at the instant, on the spot, as many people are—but it may be I wasnt ready to live as completely abreast before as it feels Im being pushed to live now—I dont understand yet but that freer feeling is still in me, and do you see darling theres a feeling of waiting thats more peaceful than most feelings in me, and inside that waiting feeling its as if theres something stretching out in me to be by you not only at times consciously but always consciously, it may grow clearer as it goes on, it isnt clear yet and theres another feeling, it is that everything its in me to love or that Im drawn by in any way I need to stretch into and pierce into and hold now far far more vehemently and vividly than Ive done before—do you see darling always before Ive loved too loosely and casually and only in moments—I know it may not seem so from my writing but I think it is so—Ill tell you exact things of each person I come against—they may be exact on the outside or they may be only exact as they come in me—it may be its not that I shall do,

there are bewildered feelings coming in me they are to do with writing, I feel something false, those peaceful feelings are going. . . . . I stopped there and I tried to pierce into what those false feelings came from, and things did come, but when I tried to write them to you something happened to my head, and also to me, its a long time ago, and I dont remember it clearly now, and also it may be I dont want to, its enough that a great many things have happened to some part of me from outside, its felt all through they were interrupting something—Im not clear whether its been more Ive been held back because I wasnt ready because do you see it feels, the nearest way I can tell it you, that my consciousness is getting born into some deeper part of me in a completer way than the way thats been till now—that doesnt give clearly the way it feels, it may come better later, but anyway do you see Im not clear whether what seemed interruptions were more tests and preparations which had to be, or whether they came more through a straying of some part in me through stretching out in this part to *put off* what I knew in some other part was coming—I think I do that oftener than Im clearly conscious of, but it may be the what seem interruptions have come through both things—anyway it feels that what comes from me to you may come differently in some way my heart, I dont know in what way differently, it may be I shall feel it, but it may be I shall not be able to define it to my mind through words, either at all or for a long time, and perhaps I shall not want to, it may be it will be enough to follow what comes—a thing has suddenly come in me, all the while Ive been trying to tell you about this in a direct definite way very bothered puzzled restless feelings have been in me, and theres been a feeling all the while like wanting to toss off from something, and now its come that that feeling is not from something in me struggling to shirk what its meant to struggle to understand, its suddenly come that when those feelings come in me theyre more than any other thing meant to light up that Im not *meant* to go on struggling to understand in that direct way.—First, I read Heartbreak House and Ill tell



you things to do with it. First, almost as soon as I'd begun reading it very depressed heavy feelings came in me, and then very strong feelings of wanting not to go on reading it, I did finish reading it, but it was like dragging and goading something in me to finish it, I've tried to understand those feelings clearer and why they're so much stronger now than they ever have been and I think it's this—you see, from the very beginning things in your writings hurt something in me, at different times in different ways—I mean the conscious feelings produced in me were different at different times—but then I wasn't clear in my mind in the constant way I am now what was the root thing these feelings sprang from that made them hurt, I hadn't linked clearly in my mind how they all hurt in the same way, however the outside feelings and outside things that produced them were different, the different outsides distracted my mind, and they have done at times even since my mind has been clear, so that do you see although the things hurt then, there was still a feeling that they were making my mind clearer, they hurt but they helped, but now it seems they only hurt and bring violent feelings and don't help at all, because the root thing is clear—you see it's not only in this, it's the same in everything—it would be the same if a person had got an inside feeling into what was at the root of why another person they loved was ill lit up in their minds in an outside form, as soon as that happened all watching for outside things they may have watched for before to help them would stop, as soon as the root thing is fixed for certain in them all interest in what lights it up from outside goes, for them themselves, all that's left is searching feelings of how to reach the root and pull it up—I'll go on with that because it helps—you see if the person who was ill couldn't agree from inside through his conscious mind that the root thing all the other things that were the matter with him sprang from was the single thing that the other person had pierced to, either because he'd fixed barriers or whatever it was from, still it might be he could be pushed to reach it somehow from outside—instead of going from the inside outwards it might be

he could be pushed from the outside inwards through things going on being spread and spread in front of him from outside until all his outside things that he kept from seeing it through were broken down and he was *driven* in because there wasnt any other place left to be in—do you see sweetheart Ive thought that it *may be* that its that way with you—that it may be that *more* than things can be lit from inside outwards in you they can be lit the other way, or even that they can only be lit that way, and so Ive thought that though outside things, to do with this—different what can be called evidences or presentments of any kind—are nothing to me myself now, no help and no interest, it may be spreading them out to you is the way Im still meant to go on with to you—but do you see sweetheart theres no fixed certainty in my mind that its meant—I know that if I were by you, and free *in every way*, both through myself and through you—I mean if you threw away all acting and bared yourself utterly to what youve never bared yourself utterly to yet—at least not consciously—I know then you wouldnt need any outside presentments, youd know the thing direct through instantly, youd know it *whole*—I dont mean youd know it so as to be able to tell it in words—that part might only come slowly, I dont know, or it might come at once too—but anyway do you see sweetheart I shall begin this way, I shall try it, then if it feels Ive mistaken and its not meant I can stop.—First, in the preface—those dragged down despairing feelings were worse while I read that than in any of the rest, I think now its because the part or thing or whatever you choose to call it in you that everything in me is struggling to break into bits and kill is more in complete control over what you are writing in this than it is in any of the other things—in the other things, the plays, sometimes I think a little thing slips through between—I mean its as if there are minutes when a thing thats what can be called on guard in you, always, gets somehow distracted for an instant and then a thing leaps straight up, or nearly straight up, and that feeling thats like a *doomed* feeling—thats the nearest way I can describe it—it lifts for that instant—I think that feeling



is from a consciousness that more than less everything that can come in you *is* doomed beforehand—that whatever it is somehow it will be used to light up theories fixed in you—that *somehow* it will be twisted into being evidence of what its not evidence of at all in any deep way—and do you see sweetheart all the way through in the preface theres that terrible terrible readiness and plainness, and all the way through theres that terrible *dead level* feeling—its like a feeling of too great clearness and too great correctness—I dont mean correctness of matter, of what is called facts and psychology and so on, theyre not always correct, though often they are in their way, but I mean a particular kind of correctness of expressing the matter that doesnt ever change in the least whatever the particular thing is—that never comes in the writings of people in whom things are growing all the while theyre writing—its not its good to be incorrect, it is that its *not possible* to be correct in the sense in which you are in this preface if you are leaving yourself open the whole time to be lit up through that deep growing thing inside you—there arent any places in this, ever—and perhaps not in any of your writings—where theres a sudden feeling of dishevelledness or plunging about or mistiness which comes constantly in reading the writing of people who are all the while open to this thing in them—and also there arent any feelings of being suddenly lit up in a particular vivid way that come also through those people—in actualness both those things are inevitable in them, both the mist feelings and the flashes through the mists because in growing things are always dying and getting born, and they always must keep plunging into mists and out of them—O sweetheart if you could only go *mad*—even if it was only a few days or a few hours—I mean the sort of madness that would clean strip you of all power to remember any of your theories or ideas or conceptions or whatever you choose to call them altogether—but yet it oughtnt to be that way, it ought to be the other way—but if only all the part of you thats fixed and shut off could suddenly drop dead and only the lovely leaping live most utterly wildly beautiful part

behind be left—and then do you see sweet you could start fresh—if you could only be all helpless and bewildered—or anyway if you could even only have that one single idea about your being superior so often to other people pulled right out of your memory—or whatever the part of you that has the power to conceive and hold it in is chosen to be called—if your *consciousness* of it could go and yet *it* stay—its not the thing itself that goads and angers people so often, which it feels you often feel it is, what brings those violently vexed feelings in them is where they know instinctively that your belief in it is being used as a ruse to blind you and them—that its being used to justify and account for things which if it wasnt in you you might feel about in a truer way—its not that its not true you are superior to most people, what isnt true is the way you often use it to explain differences of understanding of things between you and other people which its not the explanation of but only the idea you use to shut off anything else that could come up from deeper in you to make you doubt and wonder and feel a need to go on trying to search and pierce deeper—you see sweetheart youre impatient—if things dont come quick enough of themselves very well then they must be helped—you feel all those feelings about there being a great deal to do and theres a violent resisting thing in you against spending time being muddled and confused again about something that seemed settled—you terribly like things to be settled—even if its only to be settled that they cant be settled—and you know I dont feel that feeling of superiority is from conceit in you, I dont feel thats its root, or hardly at all, its much more from a more than less unconscious impatience and wanting to save time—and that idea does simplify and save time—its the same feeling that makes you able to write the way you do in the preface about people having to “ throw away ” their “ highest conscience ” during the war, theres a few lines for regret about it and then suddenly—as if youve wasted enough time—“ *but that change had to be made* ”—youve settled it like that and it feels its finished and done with and that theres no more to be said—its not like that at all—dont you see



sweetheart if you understood or had ever pierced right into it you couldnt have written like that—its true many people may have what you mean by thrown away their highest consciences, but to present it as a necessity or a *duty*—its not that at all—you see its not your conscience youre speaking of at all but your reason—the way your conscience guides you may be quite different to the way your reason does but you are not forced to throw it away because very difficult things are put in front of it to be decided, though you *may* be forced to throw your reason away—I mean you may never be able to understand clearly with your reason why you have to do things while yet you can understand quite clearly that you are to do them—I mean do you see if when something very hard comes along, if by the nearest way I can put it you *let things wrestle inside you*—I think its what most people mean by pray—then whatever comes from that, whether—if its like this, in a war—its a directing to kill, or to refuse to kill but not to refuse to put yourself in danger of being killed, or anything, whatever it is, if what comes comes out of the deepest struggling in you then *whatever it is* and however you may never be able to understand it and how it fits in—however it may always up till the end outrage your what you can call reason—still what you do out of that will fit in and neither you nor anyone will be the worse for it in the sense you mean—I know that may seem to contradict things Ive written before—it doesnt, its only going deeper—you know sweetheart I think this, I think youve never had anything to do with what I mean by your conscience at all as a constant thing—I mean youve never *lived* with it in the same way that youve lived with your work—if its put in a fantastical way, every now and then in your spare minutes youve let it interview you, like a reporter, but as soon as the interview is over its been dismissed like any other reporter and then you go on with your work, the only difference is its you who reports the interview, if you do report it—but for living with it—letting it be at your elbow free at any minute to interrupt you and disturb you and interfere with your work and upset your plans—youve

never let it do that—and until you do live with it that way I think it confuses things to talk about it—I cant go on about the preface—I thought I should be able to but I cant—there are things I rushed down in writing while I was reading it, Ive looked back at them and I *cant* write them to you—I dont understand why but when I begin to try horrible violent feelings come in me—its not that Ive changed and its not that what I felt isnt clear but I cant write it with these feelings in me—its as if youre far away—and I cant bear it—over and over while I was reading a thing kept coming in me—do you remember in *The Possessed* where Nicolai says to Shatov—And have you caught your hare? and Shatov says—Dont dare to ask like that—ask differently, *differently*—and then in the *Cherry Orchard* when Lubov asks Trofimov to have pity on her and he says—You know I sympathize with all my soul, and she says—Yes, but it ought to be said differently *differently*—over and over while I was reading the preface it kept leaping up in me—Yes but say it differently *differently*—its the same feeling that made it come out of them and its the same that made it come up in me—Dostoevsky and Tchekov understood the same thing when they made their imagined characters say that and no one can understand it, except the words, until the exact same thing has come direct from inside them—the exact same cry—and O sweetheart it comes out of such a deep kind of hopelessness and anger and adoration and imploring and *love*—its terrible and yet do you see its so beautiful.—Ill try to write about the play—Ill try to separate things in you the way I said and light up how they are. First, consciously it was written to give a type picture of what you present as cultured leisured Europe before the war and as the only part of cultured Europe which had access to the people governing it, and consciously its written to make people conscious of what that set of people separated off in your mind is like, and of their danger and to rouse them to set about altering it, and consciously you approve of plays written by Tolstoy and Tchekov because you present them to your mind and other people's as studies of the same set



of people from the same general point of view as yours, and you say that Tolstoy because he wasn't a pessimist tried to knock what you call their house down but that Tchekov because he was more a fatalist and believed they would be sold up and turned out anyway had no scruples in exploiting and even flattering their charm—I've not read Tolstoy's plays and don't feel pulled to so I can't say things about him, but I've read Tchekov's and do you see sweetheart by the way you speak of him you present a false thing that it's quite simple to see is false at once—first, you present him as writing round conceptions and theories, and the same kind that you write round, but he never did, in the sense you mean—in the sense you write round them—if he ever did begin that way the theory must have gone to bits in an instant if a living person growing out of him came up against it—I mean if it was a choice between twisting the person to fit the theory or letting the theory go the theory would have gone always because first and last and absolutely Tchekov lives in his people—that doesn't mean there are no theories and principles and ideas and conceptions and so on that are what is meant by implicit in the plays, if you choose to unweave them, there may be, and it doesn't even mean that none of the plays grew out of theories, but then that's the difference, they did grow out of them, and not round them, in the same sense that a child grows out of its clothes—and sweetheart even if you couldn't see at once that they're not true can't you *feel* how terribly vexing those sentences about Tchekov must be to people with a feeling of his plays inside them—that all that passion and pity and torment and yearning and deep deep tenderness, and those sudden leaps of fun, and that beautiful wistful *sharing* humour that all those people get born through in him should be summed up as nothing but “having no scruples in exploiting and even flattering their charm”—he never exploited them, or flattered them, not once—and in the sense you mean he was not a fatalist, he was only what can be called a fatalist in the way that made him able to write things like what Tuzenbach said about migrant birds flying, they don't know where or

why, but they still go on flying, however they think and think and philosophise they still go on flying, and they must, or that made him able to write what Ivanov said to Lvov when he told him to shut himself in his shell and do his best because everything was in the hands of God, or what Sorin said to Dorn when Dorn said that anyway hed become a State Councillor, and Sorin said that that was the one thing that he hadnt tried for, that it had come of its own accord—if you think of those things and all the rest like them as nothing but Tchekov illustrating things to do with weak intellects and weak wills by examples youll have missed all that matters—his fatalism, if its chosen to be called that is a way of expressing a consciousness that everyone and everything has if they are living with all their parts open, and that fatalism isnt a paralizing thing, its in everything. thats free and open, its only if youre living in separated bits it seems horror and paralizing—cant you *feel* how youve got everything all awry about him sweetheart—cant you feel if youd let things inside you take you and trusted to them, even drifted with them—you must be free enough to drift—instead of holding on and on to those fixed theories, that you couldnt have written like that—cant you feel sweetheart how you keep dragging things down into one violently lit corner and then glaring them at people out of that—any way Ill go back to the play and that to you and to the people who read it its a type picture of cultured leisured Europe before the war—I dont mean all the people who read it find it correct as that—they may find totally no resemblance between the picture and what they conceive as the reality, but I mean that whatever they may think of it as a picture of cultured Europe—however for instance incorrect and bad—anyway they think of it as a failure *as that*—theyve no idea for instance of its being anything like what a conjuring trick is—if they say its not a picture of cultured leisured Europe but of a madhouse thats only a metaphor way of saying its a bad picture, theyve no idea of meaning that in reality youve tricked them in some way—that under cover of seeming to draw a picture of cultured Europe youre doing



another thing—but to me do you see sweetheart, I see it as not first of all a picture of cultured Europe at all, but only that incidentally and in a sense accidentally, and in mostly all the seeming contradictions and confusions that come in criticisms of it, I see them as coming from not piercing to that the what can be called incentive at the back of your writing of the state of cultured Europe was not first of all the state of cultured Europe but first of all your state—and if you feel that in a sense the state of the person writing of other things or people must always be their incentive to write, yes, thats true, but its just the senses that make the difference. Ill try and tell you clearer what I mean. You see for instance, if Im reading Tchekov's plays, although his own particular feelings and beliefs and longings and struggles and strengths and weaknesses—his state and character—seem being lit up more and more distinctly and vividly the more I read them, Im equally conscious that what he seems to be writing about is what he's really doing, in the directest and simplest way he can—that he's as directly and simply concerned with the people and things he seems to be concerned with as its possible for him to be and that thats why he's writing about them. But I dont ever feel that when Im reading plays written by you, Im conscious that direct and simple concern about the things and people youre writing about in them isnt at the back of whats pushing you to write them—you see the difference is that what Tchekov consciously did was a real expression of what he was doing behind and never *at its root* a cover for a hidden defying thing in him to fight through—its not he didnt ever mistake and distort feelings and understandings in him by his conscious presentment of them, or that he could always or even it may be ever have traced them back to their hidden roots in him, but I mean that if the whole of what produced them in him *could* be traced and spread out in symbols that could be recognised by the same part that understood in him when he wrote and in other people when they read, it would be recognized by that conscious part in the same way that it can be now instinctively, by what can be called artistic

instinct, that they come direct in a natural way from their beginning to their end—that each end is a natural end of that beginning however many layers or planes or whatever theyre chosen to be called what appears in the end as a conscious thing in words has had to grow through before it becomes that—but with you dont you see sweetheart its different—your conscious ends are not the natural or free ends of their beginnings in the way Tchekov's are—or if its chosen to be said fantastically, your feeling and thought fathers and children arent the real fathers and children of each other, and Tchekov's are—his may be deformed, one or the other or both, but they always belong directly and simply—and thats partly what I meant when I said that in a sense your play was only a picture of cultured Europe *accidentally*—I mean that its of no more account to one part of this defying thing in you whether the struggling thats brought about through its defying pours itself into for instance hitting things or breaking things with your hands, or into writing plays to do with European culture, or into making speeches about religion or politics or war or art or anything—its of no account to this part what it pours its struggling into, whether its separated as work or as pleasure, so long as somehow its let off—it *is* important to another part what its let off into—I mean to a part thats conscious in another way—that passes or doesnt pass what it comes into you to do according as to what extent its in accord with what by the nearest way I can say it is an image or consciousness, in this part, of what you are, both in what can be presented as in aspiration and in expression—but that again is a quite separate and independent thing—I mean what it passes or doesnt pass doesnt depend on the extent to which theyre a reaching out of your whole reality but only on whether they fit in as expressions of this thing its created—theres masses and masses round that but I cant wait now—but as a what can be called artistic creation Im not sure theres ever been or ever will be anything more perfect than the thing your inside struggling has created—the thing that most people in so far as they try to understand you at all



accept as you—you see sweetheart inside and round about anything that touches that creation, or that it can touch, theres a more dazing minuteness and keenness and quickness of matching instinct between the inside images of it and the outside expressions of them, and a more terrific energy and pains put into applying what comes through that instinct than its as if could ever have been or ever will be again for any creation that in actualness is false *at its root*—and do you see sweetheart, in the creating of this, through it, by that defying thing, bit by bit theres been built up what can be watched and thought of as a great great system—its spread and spread and spread and piled up myriads and myriads of what can be called defences round itself, theories and principles and ideas and covers of all kinds, and now, most of them are so far away from the root they came from that its not a simple thing or a quick thing to trace them back in a what is meant by logical way—Im not sure I could do it, and Im not sure its meant I should even if I could—Ive seen them lit in flashes, over and over, and in other ways, but Im not sure Im meant to try to spread out what Ive seen in that way in words—anyway first Ill read the play again or parts of it, and then Ill say things as they come in me. . . . . First, do you see darling heart if things to do with you are to be lit up in you from outside it will help if you push back all conscious fighting against what comes from me, if you open everything in you to it. And if you can do that, even bare what can be called statements with nothing round them will do something in you, because to the extent theyre true expressions of true instincts in me your instincts will also meet them and recognize theyre true and then your own mind will pierce about to watch back and into you to find what brought them about and how to leave them—and do you see darling my instincts to do with the truth and falseness of things that come through words are keen—I mean here when I say the truth of things to do with words, those things which are the most natural and direct expressions through words of what they sprang from, and I mean by falseness, things that arent the natural and direct ends of

what they sprang from but things that have had a twist somewhere from whatever cause. And do you see sweetheart to me all your plays are false in that sense and all Tchekov's are true in that sense. Ill try to light it up clearer this way. If supposing some person with very keen clear instincts came against your play and began to read it as they would begin to read any other play, thats to say *as* a play, almost at once restless irritated impatient feelings would come in them, and then, more and more, instinctive feelings that things which were presented as coming from the imagined characters could not have come straight and simply from them, but so long as they went on reading it as a play, the more they tried to understand what was wrong the more bewildered and tormented they would get, because on its face theres nothing that couldnt have been, theres no crude what can be called psychological falseness in any of the characters, its clear theres a psychological theory behind each one, and that any what may seem outside changes or inconsistencies dont come from carelessness or lack of observation, its clear they are consistent with that hidden theory—but then, if either instinctively or deliberately they could suddenly begin reading the play as if it was *not* first of all what it was presented as being, a type picture of cultured Europe, but that instead all the people and things in it were first and last no other than symbols and images through which feelings and strugglings of you who wrote it could express themselves in disguised form, then at once all those restless confused impatient feelings would go and everything in them would stretch out to pierce into what brought it about that this struggling which could have been told out in a simple direct way could yet only come through in a form which was hidden not only from the people who read the play but also from you who wrote it, it might be that they would find what would light things up in them through this single play alone with nothing else, if their piercing part was very strong they might, but also they might not, and anyway it doesnt matter because I am going to try to spread out things now myself. But first Ill say a thing. You know



how you say in your preface that the people of Heartbreak House, that is of cultured leisured Europe, rhapsodize about love but believe in cruelty, and certainly that idea is expressed clearly through the play, but now this comes, you say Tchekov wrote of the same people, and even when you said he exploited and even flattered their charm because he thought they were safe to be sold out and sent adrift you couldnt have meant that he deliberately bore false witness about the deepest things he could feel in them for no other purpose than to bear false witness—its true when its looked into its hard to understand what you did mean when you wrote that, because for anyone to exploit and flatter in the way you present Tchekov as doing would be a devilish and *vile* thing to do—and you know sweetheart, if that sentence is looked into hard enough it feels it may shew itself as an instance of twisting things to fit your end in a way thats a fairly glaring way—anyway what Im coming to is this, you say that Tchekov is describing and presenting the same people as you—very well, but then this comes—theres not one single instance in any of Tchekov's plays in which a single character is presented as rhapsodizing about love and believing in cruelty—and apart from believing in cruelty none of them ever rhapsodized about love, unless its meant rhapsodized about particular people they love, even then I wouldnt be able to choose that word to describe the way they speak, but if its accepted, those few people who by any stretching of it could be said to rhapsodize about love in that sense, also believe in it, and others who by no stretching could be described as rhapsodizing about love, also believe in it, it may seem from the surface that some of the others dont believe in it, Im not clear that thats so, and also Im not clear that any of them what could be meant by believe in cruelty, though some are cruel, but Im clear that its not possible anywhere to find justification not only for saying that the particular class or set or whatever you would call it of people whom you say he fixed on specially to study in four plays rhapsodize about love but believe in cruelty, but that its not possible to say that of a single of his characters

in any of his plays, so that do you see, if its accepted that you and Tchekov are writing of the same people, either you or he must be making a complete mistake about what can be called the fundamental things theyre built from and spring from—if you say, yes, Tchekov does make that mistake—well then, if hes wrong in the foundation things about the people he writes of how is it you can care as you do care for his plays, and if you say, no he isnt wrong, then theres no way out but that you must be wrong because in that particular thing you and he are direct opposites and contradictions of each other, and you couldnt be more directly opposite and contradicting. But you see sweetheart, if its accepted, even if its for the sake of watching what comes from that only, that you are not describing the people themselves directly, but that directly you are using them as means of letting things out that are in you, then its easier to understand—but first Ill still say more before I go into that—you see sweetheart, in the way its presented in me, at some time you drew back consciously from a particular thing which drew you, whether through what can be called pride, or vanity, or timidity, or bewilderment, or all these, I cant tell, but whatever it was mostly or wholly, you drew back from trusting what stretched out which in actualness was your spirit and your self—you drew back from throwing everything away that held you back to follow it, but ever since, youve struggled to give everything you could give instead of that, to make it not matter that you held back from giving that, and its still happening—if its said in a symbol way its as if youre still heaping up things to give to make up for holding back from that, its as if youre still struggling to make what held back more and more and more strong and ready and armed and alert—but do you see sweetheart darling, this thing, creation, first and last it can only get its life and means of living from *outside*—do you see what I mean—I mean that if all means of outside expression of it were cut off—and its not only in plays and pamphlets and lectures and debates and so on it gets expressed but every detail of what can be called work that you do



builds it higher—but if all those means were suddenly cut off, which is the same as saying if it couldnt be reflected and recreated or anyway be reacted on in some way by other people—if they were cut off for instance through your becoming mad, or ill in some way—then what youve created would die and nothing could save it—people's instincts would be set free—it would be like setting them free from being hypnotised—first you hypnotised their instincts and then youve distracted their minds, like a juggler, except that a juggler knows all the while what hes doing, and you dont—and you see darling your *thinking* you do makes it worse—I mean when you what you call take to bits the thing you say youve created as an advertisement, and shew how it works, that only makes it worse and puts them and you both still further off a scent—your seeming to be so open and admitting of everything smothers their instincts down still more—and then do you see theres nothing that pleases this part more than when people violently attack what you write and find every kind of reason for what they conceive to be your distortion of the truth except the actual one it comes from—that in actualness youre not writing about it—because do you see, so long as their minds are accepting it as what it is not, but as what you present it as being, it makes no difference whether they are attacking or praising, in either case they are equally digging this creation deeper into them—a thing has suddenly come back into me that may light up better what Im saying, it was in a speech you made, a long time ago, before the war, it was chiefly about Ireland, and you were trying to illustrate some theory, it was something to do with religion, it may have been something to do with Protestantism and Catholicism, I dont remember clearly, but it felt to me that though it seemed you were doing that, you were doing something else, and that you were doing it more than you were doing the other, that the other was a means only, it felt you were presenting a picture of yourself to go into people, not directly through what you were saying, it was through something else, and I didnt know what and I dont now in a way that I could tell distinctly, or anyway not

except in a way that would be so long and need so much straining to get clear that I shall not try to do it, but any way the thing you came to was that every night your nurse who was a Catholic made a sign of the cross over you, and when you came to that suddenly several people laughed, and you know, I wasnt angry with them, it felt fitting, though I didnt think it out, but afterwards you were alone and I went back with you and almost before you said anything things blazed out of you to do with the people who laughed when you said the things you said about your nurse, it had been clear at the time that you were vexed but not that you felt the way you felt then, and I was puzzled, and afterwards I thought about it, but I think it didnt come clearly out till long after—you see, it doesnt feel that they were laughing at the nurse, or in any way mocking at any tender or protecting feeling in her that signing the cross over you might have come from, it feels they were laughing just spontaneously at something it may be they didnt understand clearly, though it may have seemed to them they did, it may have seemed to them that they were laughing because having a sign of the cross made over you seemed funny, but I think behind that their instincts were piercing still deeper and they were laughing because something you wanted to go into them and impress them had not gone into them or impressed them—do you remember how in some place you wrote about a school master and how when his wife was ill he appealed to the boys to be quiet but how they were not because they couldnt all of a sudden think of him as an ordinary human being when always before that hed been presenting himself as something different, that came into my head when I was wondering about the laughing—and also you know sweetheart it may have seemed to you that your vexation came from indignation against their mocking that feeling in your nurse, but I dont think it came from that in you in actualness, and I think if when youd told that thing the strongest feeling in you had been a feeling of gentleness and tenderness towards your nurse that they wouldnt have laughed, or that if any had, if the feeling in you had been that feeling to your nurse, then

though something would have been hurt in you it would have been hurt quite differently. . . . . Why its going to be so hard to spread this out in words is because its not a simple thing, its violently mixed. I mean that this creation is not something which is simply the opposite of what you are. If you yourself were clearly conscious of all the different parts of you or things you are joined to, and of what they came from, and if you yourself deliberately played them one against the other then it would be easy to trace and spread out what was being done, but its not like that—although on the outside it all seems clear, and from a certain viewing of it it is clear, behind its all confusion. There is your reality, things keep springing from it, they are met and twisted, theres what you have created, theres what belongs to that and fights, theres the worst thing, the translating it all into symbols that arent its own symbols and there is that consciously you are paying attention to them more than to anything—and theres another thing which I cant say exactly but which Ill say this way and an exacter way may come later, and it is, that the stronger and clearer and more vivid an impression is made on people by any of your characters as a likeness of that character, the worse the real confusion behind is made, and the contrary way, the more a character does not grip people by a feeling of its livingness and reality—the more theres an unsatisfied feeling like a feeling that theres something left out that makes everything else wrong—the less the real confusion behind but the more the conscious confusion in front. Thats why Ellie who its clear is more theory than any of the others of the chief people, is less confusing *in reality*, while consciously, if she is being accepted as a presentment of a living character, trying to understand what is the matter makes a worse conscious confusion than the others make just because the others by their greater outwardly caught likeness have kept people's instincts quieter, or if its put in another way, have engaged their minds to such an extent in recognizing and being pleased with the recognizing of things theyre familiar with that theres nothing left to pierce deeper—or at least, they



don't try to pierce deeper to the extent that there's nothing to interfere with their recognition of the outside likeness—and do you see even *knowing* that they are not the realities they seem to be, they keep tempting belief in them because they are so like them—I mean in the same way that your mind might fight against your instinct if you were to hear a piece of music played, exquisitely and with all the tone and rhythm and the rest seeming right and perfect, and by your instinct it was an unreality—that's to say your instinct pierced to that it was not a true end, springing out of love of itself, but that it was a cover for another end.

There's a thing which all your plays can be seen as, and it is as fights with separated off sex feelings. So far as I've felt when I've been with you, and also from things you've said and things you've told me and also from the plays and prefaces, your separated off sex feelings are as much trouble to you as they're mostly considered to be only to people whose bodies are younger. It feels its only through being plunged continually in a great amount of work that the troublesomeness is kept under and unconscious as that, to the extent it is. It feels that if by some what might seem accident you were compelled to be quite idle from the things you're in now, that those feelings, sex feelings, would leave you no peace. Your sex part goes out to meet other people's sex parts quite separately, its like a separate person inside you, it takes its own way, independently, and the only way it can be managed at all is by violence—inside violence I mean. If a cinema photograph could be taken of what your sex part was doing side by side with what your conscious part was doing I think you would think it funny, I don't know if it would more annoy you or more interest you, a great many things have happened between my sex part and your sex part when I've been with you but I couldn't tell you about them at the time, partly because it would have given you outside excuse for more of that conscious attitude that made you say those things you once did say to me and partly because in actualness it would have confused things worse because *finally* there'll be no separation of sex feeling from

the other—but it wouldnt have been out of what you meant when you said those things you said to me that I should have told you about my sex part and your sex part, it wouldnt have been unless Id played a part too, from fear, it would have been to light things up in you and me, but Ive watched, and I think the people whose sex part is separated from their love part always have the same kind of feelings about it and attitude to it that you have. It makes no difference whether the sex feelings are at the extreme of delicacy and fastidiousness at one end or at the extreme of coarseness at the other, they are still sex feelings and the attitude is the same in its essence. But your feelings are much deeper mixed, partly through the conscious feeling that you are a teacher and need to teach people about it—but *why dont* you tell what seem your own feelings and experiences direct in the way you said it would be good to do in that preface to *Overruled* and not indirectly and from a height and through that mist of patronizing ridicule—its true that patronizing ridicule gives a harsher feeling than the feeling that you do give, but I hate that attitude the worst of all—youre my equal—youre my equal first and last whether youre my king or god or mother or father or brother or love or child—before everything youre my equal—and then watch back and see how over and over you told me to be frank and open about my love for you—but when I was, without any of the stuff trailed over it that you trailed over it *then* you drew back—dont you see it was all theory, wanting me to be open, and courageous, and it was all right in theory—but what did you expect?—it was all theory—if youd pushed even the least way into me youd have known that if once I did throw off all the multitudes and masses that held me back and stood up before everyone and everything to tell out my love that any way it would not come out in half humorous stuff about Jove and Semele or in stuff about divine sparks and ultimate goals and all the rest—my love is real and blazing and violent and passionate—Im *consciously* suffering all the time its held back, Im *conscious* that Im dead and useless all the time and Im conscious what

its from and its hard, and very hard, to be patient and to go on grinding things out this way—I think, in some way I dont understand, something I am has brought it all about in the beginning, but feeling that doesnt make it easier.— Ill go back to the play. First, all the way through, whatever they do or say theres that quite clear feeling which you partly consciously and partly it may be unconsciously mean to convey that you, like it might be God, are just a little way behind smiling indulgently or ironically or pityingly or just amusedly down at your creatures—but its always *down* at them—and dont you see a horrible thing is that now *Im* being ironical, or superior, or something anyway that I hate—but if you could be inside me for one instant youd understand what writing about this play in this way is like to me—and it *is* writing to you now and nothing else—Im conscious that youre far away and that Im writing to you on paper—but please know that I cant write peacefully because I dont feel peaceful and please overlook the way things come out from me till this is done—I tried to leave it—but each time Ive felt pushed back—as if by some way I had to get through with this one thing before I could go on—and know darling heart, whatever violent things come out of me, theyre not *at* you but *for* you and know saying them does things I cant describe inside me, and know its only because my love is stronger I can manage to go on at all—if it werent I couldnt bear it—I dont understand what brings this violent excitement while Im trying to write these things, Im only telling you it does come, and that everything I write has to be written through that and that nearly the whole while something is trying to escape and not to go on with it. . . . . The same thing happens in this play—in actualness in all your plays but Ill keep to this—as when you are what you would call exposing the machinery of your advertisement character, your conscious object and the thing it seems that you are doing is to take off the masks and get behind and shew the reality, but if you watch into it *with your instinct* youll see how over and over this seeming lifting of the sham and seeming revealing of the reality behind it



produces the exactly opposite effect to the effect it would produce if in actualness that was being done, over and over instead of a feeling of relief and sudden ease, on the contrary its not only theres no feeling of relief, but theres more a feeling like embarrassment and perplexity and disappointment, and a feeling like resentment which is the stronger because of some dim expectation roused which has not been satisfied—what it feels in actualness is happening its that all the while there is something, your reality, pushing and pushing to be let through, and all the while there is another part side by side struggling to hold it back, but not directly or openly, but by tricks and substitutes, and by what can be called bluffing—I know the way Im telling it is confusing and that its bound to be because all the while Im spreading out what is happening, by the only way that I can tell it except by stopping all the time its as if all your parts and what theyre doing are open to each other, whereas in actualness though each is conscious in its separate way, more than less theyre all hidden from each other and working independently—and *yet they mix*—at points and at times they mix and then the tangle behind and in front is different still again because that mixing isnt harmonising, or almost never—no way I can say it can give an exact living image—I can only tell it in the way that parables tell things—its as if one part in you is driven, it can find no way out but a straight way, and it will not take that—and then by myriads of workings and reactings which by no way could be spread out it finds a way—through invented characters it will *appear* to be exposing realities—and sometimes it will do it—and then there is this thing that comes, this other part which can be called reality in you, its deep down, and if it can be said in that way the things that are happening on the surface are like things that are happening at a distance to a person watching them—a thing that is happening may be a result of what this person has done or started, or it may be believed to be that, but because its happening so far away they cant see it quite distinctly, and it may be they cant discriminate that theres been an interruption and interference with the

thing they started and that its been turned out of its way—and it may be a trick is being played on them and that at that distance they cant discriminate what actually is being done and they accept what *seems* to be being done as the reality—its like that with you—your reality is always starting things, sending them out, and then theyre always being intercepted by some other part, but because of their likeness your reality is over and over deceived and satisfied, for that time—but with the people whose piercing sense has been made very keen, from whatever cause, its not only that your apparent exposings of the realities behind the poses or masks do not impress them as that, but more than the contrary happens, they repudiate the sham realities in a way they didnt repudiate the real shams—do you understand—the masks and poses and attitudes are real presentments of real masks and poses and attitudes—real people’s poses and attitudes are like that—but then theres this, what they cover isnt what you uncover—but yet still behind that, tangled in in a way it may be I can never separate and lift out through words, in each of these sham exposings of these characters’ realities—sham as exposings of *their* realities—if you strip and strip and peel right hidden somewhere youll reach something which is *your* reality—its like a flicker or a breath—no more than that—and O my darling beautiful heart its so beautiful—but to find it—you cant except with what is like spirit fingers—its crushed and gone in a flash . . . . . Ill shew you what Ive been saying lit up in this play. Hesione and Ariadne and Hector and the captain are all presentments of accomplished actors, Hector and the captain conscious and deliberate actors, Hesione and Ariadne more instinctive ones—Randall is an actor, but not an accomplished one, a second rate one, and so long as you are shewing them acting their parts theres a strong illusion of watching real people. The instant you present them with what is meant to be their masks off—what is meant to be a sudden revealing or betraying whichever you choose to call it of their reality—if one is still accepting them as real people theres a sudden feeling of shock and disappointment—theres a feeling that

as realities theyre failures—as soon as they stop acting they seem nothing—everything they say seems crude or banal or forced or theres a horrible feeling that theyre ranting—and then mixed in with that feeling theres another thats not as defined but its stronger, its a feeling like being embarrassed and ashamed or guilty in some way—if that feeling is pierced into and tracked right down, at its root therell be found that its from a consciousness that its not they who are like that, that its you who are using them, misusing them. Mazzini and Ellie are presentments of people who are not actors, that is, not by intention, if they act its inadvertently or from what seems necessity, never from choice. If they are accepted as realities, the whole while they are there theres the same feeling of distaste and discomfort and embarrassment that only comes with the others when they stop acting—theres a bewildered feeling that their sincerity is more unimpressive and unpleasant in some way than the other people's insincerity and that yet it *ought not* to be—what seem pathos and simplicity in Mazzini by some mystery produces a feeling like sickliness which is unaccountable through anything which can be found on the outside, and what seems passion in Ellie, if its accepted as a reality, produces a particular kind of staring feeling—its a feeling thats distinct from any kind of conscious surprise at the outside moves her nature makes, at the way they shew outside, there are moves and changes that can be watched every day in real people and read of in presented people that are far more sudden and complete and ugly, and that would seem far more startling and perplexing if there was an attempt to sort them consciously than any of Ellie's are, the staring feeling comes from an *instinctive* consciousness that theyre impossible—where the others are accepted, theyre accepted without question because theres no *instinctive* repudiation of them—when I read the play with everything left out of me but my instinct—I did that, partly by intention and partly I couldnt help it—over and over there came sudden absolute refusals to accept things, they came independent of my understanding, and they came more often for things that came from Ellie than



for things that came from any of the others, and not only for the feelings and ideas that stood out and felt were meant to startle, but they kept coming for words she used, or turns of phrases—ways of saying things—over and over the same kind of vexed feeling came as comes with listening to a tune I know being played with mistakes in it—and cant you *feel* my heart how its just in proportion as you try to present deep and strong feelings you fail—and even if all the characters in your plays who are not actors are accepted as real people—and in a sense and to an extent they are—cant you feel that just in proportion as they are attempts to present people who express their real feelings direct in the simplest way its in them to express them that theyre all either superficial, or sickly, or theyre tedious and heavy—*flat*—so long as theyre acting theyre full of sparkle—theyve got a spring and lightness—what they say comes and goes in a flash—and yet theyre strong—so long as theyre acting theyve got grit—theyd all die well before an audience—but if you think of them alone its nothing—theyre nothing—and if you think of them as dead, all the part we've seen of them, it would be nothing too—it would be what you said you would be when you died, dead as mutton—and dont you feel my heart what that lights up—and it doesnt only light up one thing—or at least its one thing, but from different sides it seems different things—but I cant light all the sides, its like wheels inside wheels, and then still more, till its dazing—but dont you see how its just because you yourself are as great as you are as an actor—thats the nearest way I can say it, though in a sense its a contradiction—that you are able to recognize and appreciate and respect fine acting in other people, and from that be able to represent it in your imagined characters in a way that you cant at all represent their realities—its the opposite with Tchekov—as soon as his people begin to tell out their real feelings they move and thrill—except when theyre telling out their real feelings theyre not interesting, theyre nothing—when their realities fail them or when they fail their realities, they fail altogether, theyre just dull and grey and depressed and they cant hide it—they can dream

but they cant act, theyve got no gift for acting—if they tried to escape their realities by acting they would do it badly, and so there would be no fascination in it either for themselves or anyone, and if you cant charm any more by acting than by being yourself its no temptation to act, because the thing thats right at the root of this kind of acting—it may be of all kinds—is *some* kind of vanity, I dont mean conceit, I mean more an impatience for love or admiration—theyre the same if you look deep enough—which is intense enough in a particular way to make the people craving them try to get them for something they are not rather than endure whatever they must for any time sooner than take anything that isnt given them for what they are, absolutely and directly—and when people have what can be called a talent for acting its often far easier and quicker to get admiration, and even what seems love, for a character they can create and play than for themselves, and when thats so, if they throw all their energy into their parts its clear theres less over for their reality—in a *sense* yourself needs acting too—I mean to find out what you feel and are and translate it truly—express it—needs the same quantity of effort as acting a part needs though the quality is different—and do you see how this lights things to do with your so often fixing on people’s not being what they seem—your instinct in detecting acting is very keen, and in a sense youre always exposing shams—theres a great air and bustle of exposing that things arent what they seem in all your plays and prefaces—but when it comes to exposing what they *are*—over and over theres a feeling like a sudden drop—theres a strange feeling like impatience and loss of interest of some kind—its as if whereas before everything was keen and vigorous and clear now anything will do—its like an anticlimax—the thing itself is nothing—its what it isnt thats thrilling and fascinating—if it can be put in that way its what it *isnt* thats the real hero, what it is, by contrast is only like an artificial one—over and over theres a feeling that the reality that all this energy and fine acting is exposed as having hid is not worth exposing—that the energy used to hide it and to expose it is out of all

proportion to the value of the thing itself—and do you see darling, if you clear everything wholly and utterly out of you but what stretches out to pierce into the truest things to do with you that you can reach, you'll become conscious that theres not a single one of all the characters in any of your plays who is not first and more than any other thing a what can be called projection of some form of these struggling things in you—to trace each back to its root in that, before that could be done in any complete way through words it would be needed to pierce right back to the beginning of when this struggling began in you and to build what youve built, bit by bit, as youve built it—the difference would be, the greatest difference, that whoever did that would be doing it with all their parts watching all together, while you did it with your parts hidden from each other—and then through wide general forms it took that would grow out while they were piercing back it would be simple to trace which each particular character in your plays linked with and belonged to—and now do you see a thing thats come about through the hiding and separating of one part from the other—do you see that in actualness first and last its *you yourself* that you are patronizing and ridiculing and teaching and denouncing and pitying and all those other things that you are doing *consciously* to all your imagined characters—and so do you see a sudden thing—do you see that in actualness in the end *it is not* your acting part that has tricked your reality—do you see that in actualness it is your reality that has trapped your acting part—and do you know darling I think Ive said that over and over and over in indirect ways, or at least that its been what is meant by implicit in what Ive said, but it feels Ive never been conscious of it in this particular direct way before—but again in this, though it can be said in a general way, and though I can suddenly feel it in particular ways lit in all your characters, yet to trace it out in words—it would need the same piercing back as the other needed and in the same way. . . . . Its as if something has fallen down and its as if theres something spread in me behind it and its as if it was waiting and hidden behind



but that till what has gone had gone I wasnt ready for it. Do you remember how far back after that letter had come from Charlotte I told you that it felt that I should be held back from something not only till those feelings which were in me then were gone but that till feelings which had not come in me had come.—It feels that what is coming must come direct to Charlotte.—In what is coming to you my darling it feels that at first you will draw back from everything that comes—from my calling you Charlotte and my darling and my heart and from everything that comes from me—but everything that comes while I am stretching out to you I must spread out of me, and in an exact way as it comes in me—if you feel into what comes *from behind* youll feel its truth—if you meet it out of fixed things fixed in your mind it will seem strange and often it will feel false or meaningless or cruel—if you meet what comes from me with the whole of you open and facing it then if theres any falseness either from blindness or falseness in me then youll feel it and know it and youll put your hands on me and tell it me—inside you or it may be your outside hands—but if you draw back, and if you try to cover or defend any part of you—if you try to lift up fixed things in front of you to keep what comes from me from going direct into you with nothing between, then what comes will tear you, and then in turn there will come what stretches out in you to tear me, and to tear my love—its as if I am kneeling by you, and its as if my hands are on you in some way but I cant tell clearly in what way, and inside me theres a feeling like vehement laughing but yet its soft and very still and its as if outside theres no sound or sign of it—its as if its something in me stretching out to draw you to me—its as if its stretching out for you to bend down and laugh side by side with me—and theres a sudden feeling like passion—its that you should suddenly bend down and kiss my face and cry—and its as if inside me Im crying—listen my little heart and let things be lit in you—let the whole of you open and bend down and watch into what comes from me.—What was it drew you to my love ? on the outside it was as if it was through presentments

from you that made him yield to wishes in you—if you could watch from behind its as if *first of all* it was not your presentments or your wishes that made him yield to you—from behind its as if he did not yield to you but you to him—behind, it was not you who drew him, it was he who drew you—not his love or his pity or any tenderness in him—what defied in him drew you—you are a symbol of what defies in him—when he took you what defied in him leaped up and laughed—not as people laugh, but as what are meant by imps laugh—when he took you and married you on the outside, by the nearest way to say it it was not first of all he married you, first and before any other thing it was an outside sign of an uttermost challenge and defiance his created self could make to his reality—it was as if now at last what defied in him had triumphed—it was as if now at last nothing could break what it had done—theres something coming in me—its as if what has come from inside me is not enough for you—its as if till outside things are spread in front of you its not enough—do you remember, far back I came to you and you sent a person to send me away and to tell me my love was not there, everything was bewildered inside me and I waited, and you didnt know that I had waited and suddenly you came out and you saw me and you stood quite still and looked at me, and when you looked at me two things came, one was terror, and then a blind feeling like a need to kneel down in front of you, but I didnt, but then, when I asked you to let me see my love I suddenly knew that things were tossing and heaving in you too, but you hid it, except through your formality—all feelings that came when he came and after were blind and bewildered—nothing in me had felt what had come was coming—everything I said and everything he said is gone out of me except two things, I said, Shall I write to her? and first he said nothing and it was as if things were going round in him, and then it was as if something came in him and he said, Yes write to her—I wrote to you and what I wrote has gone out of me, but not feelings while I wrote it—while I wrote everything was stretching out in me to come to you and bow down and put

my face against you and tell out everything that was in me, and while I wrote it was as if you would understand everything that I was writing to you, and that soon you would write, and tell me to come, and that I should go, and that you would bend down and kiss me, and that I should put my face against you and that I should feel to you the way children feel to mothers, and then I waited and a letter came from you, and it was while I read it that those sudden feelings of wishing to kill you came in me—and do you see my heart while what came is growing back in me everything is growing weak and unsteady in me and all those feelings that were like laughing that were in me in the beginning are gone, and while what is coming now is coming I cant hold your hands in my imagination, what stretches out in me is not strong enough—if you could hold me then I could stay as you held me—but I cant tell if you are strong enough—if you feel its that those violent feelings that came in me when I first read it are still in me, that they are not gone out of me but only hidden deep inside me—no do you see my heart they are gone out of me, totally and utterly, theres nothing in me now while I watch back into it but feelings of tiredness and weakness and of things struggling inside me to leave what Im following and follow other things, gay things, or things like eating and so on—if that letter had not been written this need not have been—I should have come and poured out things to you alone—but it may be it had to be—its not mostly you—mostly its my love—and behind *it feels* mostly its me.—You said in the letter that you didnt wish me to come and see you, or even to write to you again, and that what you said was final, and you said that if I had been an older person and more experienced my conduct would have been inexcusable, but since I was young and not experienced, and what I was in other ways, that it was hard to hurt me, but necessary, and best for me and that in actualness you were doing it for my good, and you said that though my love felt no feelings for me but the same friendly feelings that he felt to everyone as well as cats and dogs and so on, still in part because of that indiscriminating



friendliness in him you couldnt trust him to keep me at a proper distance from him, and you said also, that when people told feelings of love direct as I had told them that it was dishonourable for them to meet the person whom they felt them for again if they were married—there were other things but I can leave them—there are things that are growing clearer in me—do you see from far back feelings have come in me at times which were like something pushing me to spread out everything which had come from my love which was to do with you, over and over it was as if by this way and no other, the falseness of your outside marriage would be lit up, but yet, each time when I tried to spread them out something held me back and I couldnt, it was nothing that I could pierce to and understand with my mind, on the outside it seemed that to spread these things out was first and last to light up what was true, but now its as if what held me back is lit up in me—if I had told out these things then I should not have lit up what was true—or to say it more exactly *more* than I should have lit up what was true I should have done a false thing—its as if hidden deep in me and behind what seemed first and last no other thing than a wish to light up what was true there was a wish in me to hurt and tear things in you as you had hurt and torn things in me, its only now that that wish has gone, not mostly but completely, that its able to be lit up in me that those things that came from my love which seemed to be more than they were other things sudden leapings up and out of suppressed feelings against you in him in actualness are not that—its as if in actualness theres no reality of hate for you yourself in him just as theres no reality of love—*consciously* its as if among other things to an extent theres a feeling like the feeling that comes for people who make things like food and other outside things easier—but in some part hidden from all his conscious mind its as if what you stand for in him torments him and never stops tormenting him and to this part its as if *what you stand for* in him he hates as he hates nothing else—its as if *all* his conscious feelings for you yourself are as nothing side by side with his unconscious

feelings to what you stand for in him—and its as if its out of this confusion of conscious and hidden things in him that at times a sudden thing leaps up which seems like hatred for you yourself but which yet, behind, first and last is hatred for things *in himself*. . . . . Do you see its hard to tell this out clearly in words, its tangled so deeply through—do you see watched from another side its as if he took you because there was totally no sex feeling in him for you—except unless theres some like children for mothers, I cant tell that, Ive not felt it in him—but theres a consciousness in him which is confused, still more because to his conscious mind he has sorted it clearly, that everything must be guarded and alert towards sex feelings in him—that he must watch them like cats mice—or more like mice cats, because its they that may catch him—except in moments which have not spread in him he has never understood that it is not directly sex feelings which would torment and master him if things were let loose in him but that directly it is their not being joined to love in him that makes them what they are for him—before he married you, to him it seemed—the way it presented itself to his mind—not that his strong sex feelings were stretching out and pulling the sex feelings of other people to him all the time and constantly, to him it seemed that it was they who were constantly and all the time pestering and pursuing him—its as if its never presented itself clearly and directly to his conscious mind that it may be that *more* than he needs to guard against them they need to guard against him—in the beginning it was the same with me—his sex feelings stretched out and pulled and pulled at mine—consciously it never came into him that his sex part was pulling mine and when I tried to tell it to him it seemed only outrageous and ridiculous to his conscious part so he didnt let it go down into him, his conscious part took it and made an attitude to it and laughed at it and scolded me as he would have scolded an ill behaved naughty child—anyway when he took you and married you *it feels* that he felt in some part of him in a dim way or a clear way, that now this would be some protection from things in people that

disturbed and interrupted him, but it hasnt—when he suddenly said, Now Ill tell you what Id tell few women, what he told didnt come then, what I was doing then didnt need it, it was that there was a person with whom he was in love, and he described things to do with her and then feelings that she brought in him when he was with her, he said other things but they were to do with what he told it to me for, it may be I shall tell that later, but its different again—and what he felt wasnt love—it feels he hasnt ever felt what I mean by love yet—but thats different again too and Ill tell you more of that too later. . . . . It feels more than less all the things that lit up ways my love feels consciously to you were said out of a conscious feeling of being sensible and considerate for you about things for which he felt by the nearest way I can say it as it was felt in me, both something like superiority and what it may be presented itself to him as feelings of friendliness, or anyway of acceptance and toleration, and more than less *all* came out of a particular kind of laughing feeling in him—but Ill pierce deeper into that later. . . . . For each thing when Ive tried to write it, except one thing, there have come such violent feelings of drawing back in me that now at this present time, except this one thing, it feels that I cant write them—Ive tried to understand, and Ive tried to understand why this thing stays—what has come is not clear but by the nearest way I can tell some part of it its as if in this thing which has stayed which its as if came more direct from unconscious parts in my love than any other thing that came from him to do with you, what was round it and what it grew out of is no matter—its as if its begun and finished in itself—its as if, with all the others, to give them separately could produce conceptions and images to do with them which could be as false as true things they would light up would be true—and to give everything that led up to them and lay round them—at this present time its too much and I cant—when I stretch out to try to do that, even where things round and before are clear, feelings come in me of a violent resisting and rebelling of something which would be like sickness if it was



in my body—with this thing that stays more than less everything that was round and before it is gone out of me but a consciousness of numb despairing feelings in me and that I said, It may be she'll die—then he said—Dont you believe it—*she'll never die*—it didnt feel he said, she'll never die—it felt it leapt out of him before he knew it—the nearest way I can tell what it brought in me is it brought feelings like feelings which have come at times for sudden vivid lightening—its a violently startled feeling—its like terror but it isnt terror—when that came—she'll never die—do you understand its as if *she* stood for far far more than a single separate person to him—consciously I dont know what it stood for in him—I cant tell. . . . . All feelings of stretching out to you as I stretched out to you in the beginning are gone, it may be they will come back, theres no feeling of antagonism, there are only feelings like the feelings that come after illness, like extreme tiredness.— If you feel that I believe my love loves me, no, its a mistake, I dont feel that. When he said—Now Ill tell you what Id tell few women, he told me what he told me to get rid of me. Telling me about that was an experiment made from an impulse and when it failed to produce what he had meant it to produce, thats to say particular kinds of feelings in me, then he was annoyed and angry, it feels any way doing it made annoyed feelings of some kind come in him—which may have come partly because he didnt understand clearly what they came from—or they may have come because it seemed he did understand what they came from—and then to feel it had been no use was more annoyance—in the end it was half anger and half fantasticalness—as when it came out in saying—Ill leave the country—its true it brought miserable feelings in me, but not the kind that it felt something in him had tried to bring in me. It was clear why he had told me and that hurt me. And it hurt me that he *meant* to hurt me. And it didnt only hurt me simply, in one place or one way, it hurt all round. It hurt because it lit up what my love was in him, what he saw it as—or if its said that way, what he didnt see it as—he said that if this

person had come that night as she had said she would I should have been in the way, because I was a kind of person who couldnt be ignored, and that they would have gone in a separate carriage, and that then she would have sat on the platform with him—and do you see if he hadnt had an image inside him, either instinctive or conscious, of some pride or vanity inside me as so childish and so crude and so much greater than any love, those things wouldnt have been worth saying to me, because its impossible that saying them could have helped but bring distasteful feelings of some kind in him. And its true I think I felt some feelings that he meant that I should feel, mixed in with all the rest, its only the proportions were all different. And then also I felt feelings while I was listening which it may be that he felt in some instinctive way that I was feeling which were not in any way what he had meant to produce or could have imagined from inside himself beforehand, and it may be they hurt something in me in some way that was worse even than the ways that any of the others hurt in—if I could have felt he loved this person, in a real way, I should have stretched out to love her too—but everything he said of her, and everything he said of feelings he felt for her only brought feelings of a particular kind of extreme shrinking that I wasnt conscious had ever come before in me—like shuddering—it may be I shall tell them clearer later—or it may be I shall not—it may be I shall not touch any of this again.—But do you see although I think Ive never felt my love has any love for me Im conscious he belongs to me in a way I can feel and know things about in a way I cant feel and know about other things—but do you see, what I mean by people belonging to each other is not what I mean by love—at least, its not often what I mean by love—its true that the extent of people's belonging to each other is the extent of their power to love each other but its not of any necessity the extent of their loving of each other, and its also true that people who belong in no way closely to each other can yet love each other more than others who belong far closer, but it doesnt change it that the others still will always have the power to love each

other most and that more could come out of that loving than could ever come through the other—and its also true that people can use their loving power to love *conceptions* of other people to whom it may be they dont belong in any way—more than all people belong to each other, and it may be are each other finally, but Im not speaking of things I cant reach to with what Im speaking out of now—but when thats so its not the people themselves that they are loving at all, they are only loving through them, they are using them as a means—you can love people as a means and as themselves too, but thats different again too—but with the other, its not an idea of mingling, or an effort to mingle or share with each other, its mingling—they can fall into each other in every way with no effort of any kind of their minds before it—but thats still not love—it may be what can be called bliss, while it lasts—that finding of yourself outside yourself—but it wont last bliss if no mind effort is made—for love, of any deepness or fulness, its as if there must always be effort of some kind being made—not strain, but I mean that love is not abandonment, thats not its whole, but only a power in it—it has a power for everything—and it makes everything ecstasy—and there are dangers in that—things are so beautiful that often its enough to lie in them and not stir—its good to do that but its good to stir too—I think in some dim time Ive held my love away too long—and I think what drove him out of that is still driving him—but I dont *know* that, its only a way to say something that I feel—but I *know* this—that though my love could kneel down and worship you as he could worship hills or the sky or the night or life of any kind, that by no effort of any kind could he mingle into you and *become* you as he could mingle into me and become me—what you are and what my love is must remain two separate things, as separate as two boxes, or two ships—you can touch each other but never become each other—but what I am and what my love is—if my love stretched out to me we should not only be two separate things, we should be three things, we should be what each is separately, and then a third thing, as distinct and separate and single—



and out of that things need to come which can never come from any other thing, and never from either separated.

. . . . .

And if you feel, then if its in him to love me then why doesnt he love me—there are things to do with it that can seem to be separated out and said in words, the simplest is, he doesnt want to love me. I dont mean he is conscious of wanting not to love me and holds back from it deliberately, I think its deeper than that. If Id been braver and truer I think its true it would have been a conscious holding back, and then I should have needed to separate away from him on the outside sooner than it has happened, it was through dread of that and struggling to keep from it that I let false things begin and then drag on—I know now clearly that if Id been brave and true from the beginning as it may be I could have been—but it may be I was not able, I dont know—that masses and masses that have had to be undone and gone back through would never have been done, and so would never have needed to be undone. But do you see now when I watch back Im conscious that in my instinct I knew clearly from the beginning that if a clear conscious sight of what might come through stretching out to me came in my love that he would draw back from me. In that part of me I knew that so long as I seemed no other than the *kind* of child and person in other ways that his theory part had fixed me to be, that he would play with me, however that playing was disguised to him as educating me and turning me from being something idle and mischievous into being something working and useful—and you see he did—all those letters—or nearly all—were in actualness playing with me, or at least with imaginations of me—but do you see I myself was confusing him and helping to make up those imaginations—and see how one after the other the separated off theories to do with me he started from and pushed me to do things out of were gone back from later—not much consciously gone back from because it wasnt like a play or a lecture where things spread straight in a row so that what is begun from can be

looked back to and compared if they are forgotten, but with me I think things that were started from and that I was pushed to do things out of were in actualness forgotten by him—see how over and over in the beginning he pushed me to tell out how I loved him—it was from a theory to do with my needing to be more open and frank and courageous and so on—but when I did, and it didnt fit in to the theories that pushing me to do it had come from in him, then it was different—and its quite true I did need to be more frank and more courageous—and all the things that come in him are true in their places—its the proportions that are all wrong—and that comes from that terrible impatience about life in him—his theories about life he can work at and work things out about with infinite infinite patience, but life itself, no—he doesnt worship *life itself*—he doesnt love *it itself*—if you love direct in any form *anything* theres a kind of deep excitement thats like dancing and laughing—and yet its like brooding—it melts you into it—into the thing you love—I cant say it clearer—but with my love—he never plunges right in the whole—he picks bits out—or something comes that seems an example of his theories—and then something in him goes bounding after it—he catches it and puffs and puffs into it till its not its own size, its the size to fit his theories—but when it stays the same size to other people thats what brings the strange feeling and like a disappointed feeling that often does come—theyve felt all the preparation in some part of them and its prepared that part for something to match—and when the thing comes—over and over it seems so much slighter in him than what its an example of thats gone before it—*things themselves* he touches and pierces into far far more carelessly and lightly than his theories about them—the theories stand, but examples of them—so soon as they spread outside the stretch of the theories theyre left—other things are found for this thing in him to bound after—I wanted with everything true and real in me to *be* true and real, not in theory, but in actualness—he wanted me to be true and real only so long as it seemed to be a good and interesting and unusual example of his theories—but

he didnt *know* that it was only so long that he wanted me to be true, but I knew it—at first not clearly with my mind, but even at first with my instinct part—but the more I grew conscious of it the worse it grew—I didnt face it straightly, because of what Ive said, but the outside things that came through the inside struggling in me were ugly, and not a kind of ugliness that was moving, it was more dreariness and dullness and vagueness, or else being suddenly irritable and defiant in a particular kind of jerking way, or being reproachful, or moaning, or being ill—there are deeper things Ive not touched to do with it—see what it would mean to love me—its as if its not only a choosing to love one person and to leave another—in a sense it may not be that at all—though *inside* there are ways it must be that—but if you could watch from behind it may be it would seem like a sweeping back of a whole life, and from it—and not only from a single life—think of what has spread from it—it feels its not only a struggling for my love's love—though it is that—and in actualness its as that and *only* as that that I can struggle for it consciously—but because its only as that that I can struggle for it consciously it doesnt alter it that to the extent that its more than that its harder for me to break through—I must leave you now darling though it may be I shall write things to you again in between writing them to my love.—Ive come back to you my heart—its as if something is done and I can leave it—if its not done things behind may know and see how I can go on, but I dont know how I can go on—writing these things and this way does something to me I cant clearly understand—I understand that it moves things in me away from a directer stretching out to you—but what it is that produces the strength of the struggling and resisting things that do struggle in me then—thats hidden—and I give in to them—in between while Ive been writing what Ive written to you and to Charlotte, at times things have come in me that I myself have helped and made deliberately, it may be to get away from this—and Im not clear that I could tell them to you out in words—I know I couldnt write them and I think I couldnt tell them



to you, though I could make you understand them, some of them.


. . . . .

Ive waited and things have come. Its come that theres one thing left to do and that then Im free to stretch out to you in the way that it seemed that I was free in when I began to write to you before. I think *in the end*—Ive no clear consciousness which is anything definite in me when I say, in the end—I mean that Ive no distinct image in me that corresponds when I say in the end there more than I should have if I said in the beginning, but it means something to some part of me—but when what I mean has come, I think its true that it will make totally no difference whether things that come are before all people or many people or few people or only one person—I mean to the part that it makes a difference to now it will make none then—it will make a difference, but not the one it makes now—do you understand dear heart, I mean there will be no holding back of anything before people, or trying to hold it back, from the feeling which the nearest way I can say it is like a *panic* feeling—do you see, every time I send what Ive written out among actual people a feeling comes in me which the nearest way I can say it again is like holding something inside me which is like the feeling of a wild animal being held—its the same feeling as they give if you are holding them if theyre helpless or hurt in some way—its utter wild blind terror—and the same feeling that comes with feeling their hearts beating and beating—the two things, that terrible frenzy of beating inside and then that utter fixed stillness outside of the way they look at you—its an exact way that something I hold back feels in me when I send out my writing—it will go, but not yet, and there are things to be done first.—I am going to send everything Ive written to particular people that come in me—it may be not everything to all of them and it may be I shall not know clearly why I send it to some of them but I shall know why I send it to others—and I am going to write to them, now, at the end of this,

and the root thing of what Im going to write to them has come already.

. . . . .

A feeling has come which is like a directing that now at this time the need to spread out things which come in me through printing them is over, that something which it was as if needed to be spread out in this way is finished—it may be if I reach my love while I am still in my body I shall be pushed to write again this way, I cant tell—what is in front of me in what is called an immediate way has come into me, it is that from now I am freed to stretch out to my love in a way which is still again simpler and directer than the ways that have been till now—its not yet direct in a complete way, there are still things between, but now its nearer—its as if, by the nearest way I can say it, all Ive written and spread out, each thing, if it could be watched from behind it would be seen as a thing that till it had been pierced into and spread out through my mind lay between me and my love—its as if its from this that over and over there have come feelings of confusion since it was as if what was needed to pierce into and tell out these things drew strength from what stretched out side by side all the while in some part in me to go, and kneel down, and give what I am to my love with directness and with a simplicity which its as if comes from a separation in this part in me from a power to be conscious of any need to struggle or make effort of any kind to break through any thing either inside or outside me that holds me back from my love—in this part *there is* nothing between me and my love. . . . . What pushes to come out of me through words its as if is harder to tell out of me than anything which has come into me from the beginning with a feeling of a need behind it to tell it out through words—its not harder from a wish to hide it—while what is coming is coming my dear hearts stretch out to meet what comes out of some part in you which is deeper than what you mostly stretch out of to meet things which come through words—theres no other way through which I can tell these things in me than direct



out of this part in me to this part in you. . . . . Will you pray for me my dear ones—will you gather something in you round me and pray for me to follow what comes into me whatever holds me back from it—and can you feel my dear ones if you draw me nearer to my love its not only that you draw me nearer to my love—can you feel deep in you what you are tearing down and letting loose in you—can you feel a dim dim knowledge in you that behind a single separate thing there are things which are struggling to push out through you—and will you pray for me my dear ones not only out of dim feelings in you but still more out of everything that laughs and dances in you—its as if if inside you you stretched out your hands and took my hands out of everything that laughs and dances in you I should reach my love.



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